

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 STR-07
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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 02722

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, PINT
SUBJECT: COMMUNIST ATTITUDE TOWARD ELECTION OF
PONTILLON AS PRESIDENT OF EC SOCIALISTS UNION

1. SUMMARY: THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) HAS RE-
ACTED SHARPLY TO THE JANUARY 19 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ROBERT
PONTILLON'S ELECTION AS INTERIM PRESIDENT OF THE
UNION OF SOCIALIST PARTIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
(EC). PONTILLON, OF COURSE, IS THE FOREIGN POLICY
SPOKESMAN FOR THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY (PS). THE
EPISODE IS INSTRUCTIVE AS TO HOW COOPERATION BETWEEN
FRENCH AND OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS CAN CREATE FURTHER
OBSTACLES TO THE UNION OF THE FRENCH LEFT.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE PCF ORGAN L'HUMANITE IN A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE
JANUARY 20 COMPLAINED THAT PONTILLON OWED HIS ELECTION
TO HELMUT SCHMIDT, AND THAT IT DEMONSTRATED THE "SATIS-
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FACTION" OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS WITH THE PRESENT POLICY
OF FRANCOIS MITTERRAND AND THE PS. HUMANITE WENT ON
TO EXPLAIN THAT LAST JULY THE UNION OF EC SOCIALIST
PARTIES ADOPTED A "COMMON PROGRAM", TO WHICH PONTILLON
AND SEVERAL OTHER PS NOTABLES CONTRIBUTED. ACCORDING
TO A PCF ANALYSIS PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER, "AT THE
MOMENT WHEN THE PS WAS ABANDONING IN FRANCE THE ESSEN-

TIAL PROVISIONS OF THE COMMON PROGRAM OF THE LEFT, IT WAS COMMITTING ITSELF TO AN OUTLINE OF A SUPRA-NATIONAL PROGRAM OF AUSTERITY AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT WHICH, AS NOTED QUICKLY BY THE FRG PRESS, CARRIED THE STAMP OF THE SPD."

3. HUMANITE CLAIMED THAT, ALTHOUGH THE PS STATED IT WAS NOT COMMITTED BY THE PROGRAM OF THE UNION OF EC SOCIALIST PARTIES, PONTILLON ASSERTED JUST THE OPPOSITE AT AN SPD CONGRESS. FINALLY, HUMANITE SAID THAT PONTILLON'S ELECTION WAS HIS REWARD FROM SCHMIDT FOR ABANDONING THE COMMON PROGRAM OF THE FRENCH LEFT, AND RECALLED THAT SCHMIDT HAS STATED PUBLICLY HIS OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENCE OF COMMUNISTS IN EC GOVERNMENTS.

4. COMMENT: THE PCF AND PS HAVE BEEN EXCHANGING HEATED ACCUSATIONS OF BAD FAITH SINCE LAST OCTOBER, AND WE WOULD NOT WISH TO EXAGGERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PARTICULAR INCIDENT (SEE SEPTTEL REPORTING A MORE FAVORABLE PCF ATTITUDE TOWARD COOPERATION WITH THE PS). HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT IS INSTRUCTIVE IN THAT IT REVEALS HOW SENSITIVE THE PCF IS TO COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE PS AND OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS ESPECIALLY THE SPD. THE PCF CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROTEST SHARPLY WHENEVER IT SENSES THAT SUCH COOPERATION COULD

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DRAW THE PS CLOSER TO THE MORE MODERATE SOCIALISM ESPOUSED IN MOST OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. FURTHER STEPS BY THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS TOWARD INCREASED COOPERATION WITH THEIR EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES COULD THUS CREATE ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES TO A PCF-PS REUNION.

END COMMENT.

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